

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 122494
ORIGIN EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 /029 R

DRAFTED BY EA/RA:DSHARRIS:JG
APPROVED BY EA/RA:WGIM
EA/ANP:WLGALLAGHER
-----270606Z 071517 /15

R 270022Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 122494

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE OF SDA OFFICER AT RCIA CONVENTION

FOR LABOR OFFICER

1. GERRY O'KEEFE, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, RETAIL CLERKS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION (RCIA) TELEPHONED EA LABOR ADVISER ON EVE OF O'KEEFE'S DEPARTURE FOR ILO MEETING GENEVA. O'KEEFE WISHED TO INFORM LABOR ADVISER ABOUT POSSIBLE SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT AT THE RCIA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN HONOLULU JULY 24-29 (WHICH LABOR ADVISER WILL BE ATTENDING). ACCORDING TO O'KEEFE JIM MAHA (SPELLING PHONETIC) OF THE SDA (SHOP ASSISTANTS, DISTRIBUTORS AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION - EVIDENTLY RECENTLY FORMED OUT OF THE MERGER OF TWO UNIONS) HAD TELEPHONED FROM MELBOURNE TO INFORM HIM ABOUT A MOTION MADE BY BARRY EGAN, SDA
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SECRETARY. EGAN HAD MOVED AT A RECENT MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD THAT THE SDA SHOULD DISAFFILIATE ITSELF FROM THE FIET BECAUSE OF RCIA MEMBERSHIP IN FIET ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE RCIA HAS BEEN "NAMED AS BEING A TOOL OF THE CIA."

2. RANKING RCIA OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON KNOW EGAN WELL

AND HAVE ENTERTAINED HIM A NUMBER OF TIMES IN WASHINGTON. THEY HAVE ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT HE WAS A STRAIGHTFORWARD AND SOUND TRADE UNIONIST WITHOUT ANY RADICAL LEFTIST LEANINGS. FURTHERMORE, THEY HAVE INVITED HIM TO ATTEND THE CONVENTION IN HONOLULU. MAHA SAID THAT NOTHING CAME OF THE MOTION BECAUSE NOBODY ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SECONDED IT. HOWEVER, THE SDA NOW WOULD BE VERY EMBARRASSED IF EGAN WERE TO APPEAR IN HONOLULU WHICH THE SDA SUSPECTS HE MIGHT DO, FOR MYSTERIOUS PURPOSES OF HIS OWN, IN ORDER TO PUBLICIZE AT THE CONVENTION THE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT A CIA LINK.

3. O'KEEFE DOES NOT KNOW AT THIS POINT WHAT, IF ANYTHING TO DO, ABOUT THE RCIA INVITATION TO EGAN. OBVIOUSLY RCIA WOULD NOW PREFER THAT EGAN NOT COME. TENTATIVELY THEY ARE THINKING OF SIMPLY NOT ACKNOWLEDGING HIS ACCEPTANCE IF HE SENDS ONE IN.

4. WE ARE NOT SUGGESTING YOU TAKE ANY ACTION ON THIS INFORMATION BUT WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR KEEPING YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN AND REPORTING ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MATTER YOU MIGHT PICK UP. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, POLICIES, MEETINGS, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE122494
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DSHARRIS:JG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770189-0940
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977059/aaaaahfc.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d76c179a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2628852
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ATTENDANCE OF SDA OFFICER AT RCIA CONVENTION FOR LABOR OFFICER
TAGS: ELAB, AS, SDA, RCIA, FIET, (O'KEEFE, GERRY), (MAHA, JIM), (EGAN, BARRY)
To: MELBOURNE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d76c179a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009